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New York

President:	Mr. Rycroft/Mr. Wilson	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Liu Jieyi
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	Ethiopia	Mr. Alemu
	France	Ms. Azoulay
	Italy	Mr. Amendola
	Japan	Mr. Minami
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zagaynov
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United States of America	Ms. Sison
	Uruguay	Mr. Rosselli

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Destruction and trafficking of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and in situations of armed conflict

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Destruction and trafficking of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and in situations of armed conflict

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and Brigadier General Fabrizio Parrulli, Commander of the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage.

Mr. Fedotov is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Vienna.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2017/242, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Senegal, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Uruguay

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2347 (2017).

I now give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: I thank the Security Council for this opportunity to brief it on this important topic, as well my United Nations colleagues Ms. Irina Bokova, Mr. Yury Fedotov and Brigadier General Fabrizio Parrulli.

I would like to start by expressing my sincere condolences to the loved ones of the victims of Wednesday's terrorist attack in London, as well as my deep sympathy to the people and the Government of the United Kingdom. We needed no reminder of the horror of terrorism. But the London attack — like those in Kabul, Baghdad, Maiduguri and so many other places recently — must move us to strengthen international counter-terrorism cooperation in line with international human rights and humanitarian law standards.

In particular in armed conflict situations, today terrorists are not only destroying lives but are also visiting their horrific violence on historical sites and objects. The deliberate destruction of cultural heritage and the trafficking in items of great artistic, religious or cultural significance target individuals and communities on cultural and religious grounds. The protection of heritage, then, is not only a cultural issue, it is also a security and humanitarian imperative. Terrorist groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant exploit cultural sites to finance their activities

while strengthening their linkages with transnational organized crime. They also destroy and traffic cultural heritage to undermine the power of culture as a bridge between generations and people of different backgrounds and religions. Resolution 2347 (2017), just adopted, aims to strengthen international cooperation to deprive terrorists of funding, but also to protect cultural heritage as a symbol of understanding and respect for all religions, beliefs and civilizations.

Awareness of the essential importance of the protection of cultural heritage is not new, but it has grown considerably over the past several years. In establishing the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali through resolution 2100 (2013), the Security Council established the link between the illicit trafficking of cultural objects and the financing of terrorism. Resolution 2322 (2016) urged States to bolster cooperation to prevent and combat trafficking in cultural property and related offences that benefit or may benefit terrorist groups. Meanwhile, during the fifth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, the General Assembly expressed concern, in resolution 70/291, that terrorists may benefit from transnational organized crime in some regions, including from the trafficking of cultural property, and condemned the destruction of cultural heritage by terrorist groups. In paragraph 3 of resolution 68/127, the General Assembly deplored

> "attacks on religious places and shrines and cultural sites in violation of international law, in particular human rights and humanitarian law".

Moreover, there is already a strong international legal and normative framework to address these crimes. This is based on the United Nations Conventions against Transnational Organized Crime and Corruption, the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and the International Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and other Related Offences.

Protecting cultural heritage requires us to make every effort to implement this international legal and normative framework and strengthen international cooperation. It also demands a global criminal-justice response that can prevent trafficking in cultural property by disrupting organized criminal and terrorist networks, including through anti-corruption and anti-money-laundering action, and bringing perpetrators to justice. We need to put a stronger focus on investigation, cross-border cooperation and exchange of information, and on bringing in private and public sector partners, including dealers and the tourism sector, to promote supply-chain integrity and stop the illicit trade and sale of cultural property.

The United Nations system, particularly through the entities of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), is increasingly supporting Member States' efforts to address these threats through advocacy and capacity-building assistance. For example, the UNESCO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime are already working together, along with INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and other partners, to assist Member States in protecting cultural heritage and countering the trafficking in cultural property. As CTITF Chair, and in the light of this debate and the resolution that was adopted today, I will encourage the CTITF Inter-Agency Working Group on Countering the Financing of Terrorism to develop new projects to help Member States protect their cultural heritage.

The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, have demonstrated their determination to further integrate the protection of cultural heritage in their counter-terrorism work. With the support of United Nations entities, Member States are strengthening their legal frameworks and criminal justice systems and enhancing their collaboration to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks against their cultural heritage. I believe we can, and must, do even more. Resolution 2347 (2017) provides a good basis to do just that. The United Nations stands ready to do its part.

The President: I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Bokova.

Ms. Bokova: Allow me, first of all, to express my deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of the United Kingdom following the deadly terrorist attack in London, which reminds us of our responsibilities to fight extremism and terrorism.

(*spoke in French*)

Allow me to express my sincere emotion at the adoption of historic resolution 2347 (2017), which demonstrates a crucial recognition of the role of cultural heritage in maintaining peace and security. Heritage is our identity. As I look to the members of the Security Council, I see images of the pyramids of Egypt, the

Island of Gorée in Senegal, Mount Fuji in Japan, Red Square in Moscow and Qhapaq Ñan in Bolivia and sites in other countries of Latin America.

Cultural heritage tells the story of peoples in all their diversity. It embodies the points of reference and values that define our shared humanity and ensure the cohesion of our societies. Some have given their lives to defend it. As German poet Heinrich Heine wrote, everywhere men burn books and culture, they end up burning other men. History has too often proved that to be true.

The deliberate destruction of heritage is a war crime. It is also a tactic of war to accelerate the long-term degradation of societies, as part of a strategy of cultural cleansing. That is why defending cultural heritage is more than a cultural issue; it is a security imperative that cannot be separated from the protection of human lives.

Hidden behind the beauty of Palmyra is a story of cultural exchange between Asia, Persia, Rome, and the identity of the Syrian people. At the Shrine of Jonah in Mosul we see the interaction among Judaism, Christianity and Islam — a symbol of unity.

Cultural heritage demonstrates the existence of cultural dialogue. It tells us our history and suggests a shared future. Extremists know this, and that is why they seek to destroy it. In adopting resolution 2199 (2015), which prohibits trade in cultural property from Iraq and Syria, the Security Council struck at the heart of violent extremism through its financing, and entrusted to UNESCO, INTERPOL and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) the responsibility to lead the fight against trafficking in antiquities. That resolution has already led to significant results.

In a global movement launched by UNESCO, approximately 50 States have already strengthened their legislation and are sharing information to dismantle networks and to facilitate restoration. UNESCO, INTERPOL and UNODC are working like never before with customs services, the private sector and museums to bolser cooperation against drug trafficking. The resolution just adopted represents a huge step forward, which reflects a new vision of the links between peace and heritage. I commend France and Italy and all the other co-authors for this initiative.

Italy has created the world's first special unit to protect cultural heritage in emergency situations, led by the Italian Carabinieri under Commander Parrulli, who I salute here today. France and the United Arab Emirates have just launched a new fund, which already has more than $75 million.

The UNESCO global strategy, adopted in 2015, is based on a clear understanding of our responsibility to coordinate international action. In our role as custodian of international law on cultural heritage, we are crafting common policies and standards through the implementation of The Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, and the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

As soon fighting ceased in Palmyra, Aleppo, Nimrud and Ashur, UNESCO was on the ground to take preliminary measures to secure sites and prevent further damage. We have raised awareness among the armed forces in Maly by distributing 8,000 heritage passports, such as this one, so that each soldier knows the location of sites and their cultural significance.

I commend the Security Council once again for including the protection of cultural heritage in the mandates of peacekeeping forces. Given that cultural heritage is, as it were, on the front line of conflict, it should also be at the forefront of peace.

UNESCO is working with the International Criminal Court to end impunity for war crimes against culture. Our cooperation has led to the conviction of individuals responsible for the destruction of Timbuktu's mausoleums, which are standing once again today after being rebuilt by UNESCO in an effort to speed up reconciliation and strengthen cohesion — just as we did 12 years ago in rebuilding the Mostar Bridge, destroyed by the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For everywhere culture rises anew, people rise with it.

Weapons are not enough to defeat violent extremism. Building peace requires culture as well, and it requires education, prevention and the transmission of heritage. That is the message — I hope — of this historic resolution and its immense scope.

The President: I thank Ms. Bokova for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fedotov.

Mr. Fedotov: At the outset, allow me to ask you, Mr. President, to convey my heartfelt condolences to

the British Government and the people of the United Kingdom on the occasion of the terrorist attack in the centre of London. Our sympathies are with the families of the victims of this barbaric act.

The adoption today of resolution 2347 (2017) and the Security Council's continued commitment has helped to keep the spotlight on the involvement of terrorist groups and organized crime networks in the destruction, looting, trafficking and sale of cultural heritage. The need for action is more urgent than ever in the face of the mass destruction of heritage sites in Syria and Iraq and the seizure of thousands of objects near the borders of those countries, which may represent just the tip of the iceberg.

The destruction of landmarks — such as the Buddhas of Bamiyan, the Roman monuments in Palmyra and shrines and mosques in Tikrit and Mosul — are reprehensible attempts to erase human history. But the destruction and looting are also generating profits for terrorists through trafficking, carried out in collusion with organized crime groups. Those profits fund further acts of terrorism and enable yet more destruction and looting of cultural sites and archaeological treasures. This crime cannot be allowed to continue unabated.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been working in close cooperation with our partners at UNESCO, as well as with INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and others, to strengthen national, regional and international responses. UNODC is providing technical assistance and capacity-building and facilitating international cooperation to prevent and combat trafficking in cultural property. That includes support to implement the International Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and other Related Offences, adopted by the General Assembly in 2014.

Our support to Member States has its firm foundation in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. Those conventions enjoy near universal membership. They are applicable to organized crime, corruption and terrorism, and they provide the framework the international community needs and can use to prevent, criminalize, investigate and prosecute trafficking in cultural property, as well as its use to finance terrorist groups and to support return and restitution. Those conventions, which apply at all times, represent important foundations in peacebuilding and post-conflict interventions. they are our best hope for preventing and countering this crime and bringing perpetrators to justice.

The full implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption is especially essential, as trafficking relies on corrupt officials and dealers to enable looted items to cross borders and be offered for sale. This framework, alongside international instruments developed under the auspices of UNESCO and the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law, can help ensure that national legal frameworks can deal with this crime; that investigative agencies are set up and able to act; that law enforcement and judicial officers have the training they need; that sound border management, as well as customs and anti-money-laundering controls, are in place; that international cooperation is supported; and that public and private actors, including museums, dealers and the tourism sector, assume their responsibilities.

We have treaties. We have tools. We have guidelines. And we have training materials. But we need to operationalize commitments more effectively, and we need Member States to provide more resources in the spirit of shared responsibility. In response, UNODC is seeking to shed more light on the dimensions of this crime to help the international community better target joint action.

We are pursuing funding for a project, in cooperation with UNESCO and other partners, to undertake a global study to, first, identify the main trafficking routes, modus operandi, extent and patterns involved and, secondly, to determine the critical criminal justice challenges countries are facing and to provide tailored assistance. I hope we can rely on members' support. UNODC's experience and research expertise in confronting transnational organized crime, corruption and terrorism remain at the Council's disposal to stop criminals and terrorists from profiting from the destruction and theft of our shared cultural heritage.

The President: I thank Mr. Fedotov for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Comander Parrulli.

Mr. Parrulli: I thank the Security Council for giving me an opportunity to speak on this important day.

The Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage is the world's first police unit specializing in the protection of cultural heritage. Since its foundation, in 1969, it has been on the front lines in the fight against trafficking in cultural heritage. To date, our investigations have led to the recovery of almost 800,000 works of art and the seizure of more than 1 million archeological artefacts. We have investigated approximately 35,000 people and detained more than 1,000. Those figures demonstrate the Carabinieri corps steadfast commitment to defending the world's collective traditions and history.

More often than not, trafficking in cultural property is a transnational crime, which requires a transnational investigative approach. Objects are stolen from one country, smuggled across the border, or the borders, of another, and then sold illegally in another country — perhaps ultimately finding a home in yet another country. INTERPOL provides pivotal international police cooperation, but that is not always enough. The looting and smuggling of cultural property is a complex crime that requires a specific focus and unique expertise that goes beyond the usual toolkit of police personnel. The only way to successfully protect cultural heritage is through close inter-agency work across borders.

In that context, the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage serves as a model for other countries when it comes to engaging international cooperation at the judicial, law enforcement and specialist levels. We strongly advocate the setting up of specialized police units for the protection of cultural heritage in every country.

In our search for cultural artefacts that have been exported from Italy, we often end up helping other countries track down and repatriate their own looted properties. We have also deployed as part of international cooperation missions, such as those to Nasiriya, Iraq, from 2004 to 2005, pursuant to resolution 1483 (2003).

The Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage also provides training, in Italy and abroad, for judges and prosecutors, police officers, customs officials and experts and practitioners from culture ministries. We recently signed technical arrangements with several national and international stakeholders.

In order to improve international police cooperation in the protection of cultural heritage, we share information, best practices and lessons learned. Our most powerful tool — the database of stolen cultural artefacts — stores more than 1.2 million images and files on stolen artefacts, as well as the more than 6 million pictures and descriptions of artworks covered by our investigations. Originally the world's largest archive of stolen artefacts, it is now a powerful data analysis tool for processing data entries and aiding our investigations.

Our latest initiative, the "Unite4Heritage" Task Force, made its successful debut in the aftermath of the terrible series of earthquakes that struck Italy in late 2016. The Task Force is a team of specialized Carabinieri Command personnel who work alongside civilian experts from the Ministry of Culture to assess the risks and quantify the damage to cultural heritage in crisis-affected areas and to devise the necessary action plans, including providing training courses for local staff, assisting in the safe removal of transportable artefacts from endangered or looted sites and strengthening the fight against looting and trafficking in cultural property.

Together with UNESCO, we are now working on a stand-by agreement to allow the deployment of the Unite4Heritage Task Force overseas under the United Nations flag. Meanwhile, we are liaising on a bilateral basis with several countries, including, most, recently Iraq. I just visited the UNESCO field office in Baghdad to identify venues of cooperation to address archaeological areas devastated and looted by Da'esh. The Unite4Heritage campaign has raised awareness of the threats to cultural heritage, mobilized players beyond the cultural heritage communities and expanded UNESCO's efforts to coordinate technical work among various specialized agencies and institutions.

In the light of the experience, success and cutting-edge work of the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, I am honoured to be here today to welcome the adoption of the historic resolution 2347 (2017). We also welcome the spirit of the resolution and its effective measures calling for unified procedures, stronger ties between Member States and police forces, broader definitions of crimes against cultural heritage and stricter regulations on the illegal trade of items with undocumented origins.

The President: I thank Brigadier General Parrulli for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

I call on the Minister of Culture and Communication of France.

Ms. Azoulay (France) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2347 (2017) as a historic step in our common fight to protect endangered cultural heritage. We meet this morning in the Security Council, in the heart of a global city that symbolizes modernity — *In the Shadow of No Towers*, to borrow from the work by Art Spiegelmann. But this morning, given the subject of our meeting, we also are gathering in the lost shadow of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, which were ripped from our world and blown to smithereens, whereupon their mute power to move and inspire was lost. We are gathered in response to appeals for the manuscripts and mausoleums of Timbuktu, the stone colossi and the statues of the human-headed bulls from Mesopotamia.

Deliberate attacks on human cultural heritage are rooted in a desire to obliterate memory, reject the past and strip history of its meaning and lessons. It is the same destructive desire that targets the living bodies of women, men and children, but also the stone and clay of our heritage treasures held in museums. It is the same macabre desire, the same willingness to break what might have existed in the past in order to snuff out the hope of a future. We owe those people — the women and men — respect for their past. We must pass on their history to our children and to our children's children, because that history is part of the common heritage of humankind. We must stand with all of those who, sometimes at the cost of their own lives, seek to salvage those treasures of humankind from the abyss.

The international community would thus be supporting what Léon Blum rightly called the "conscience of the United Nations", namely, UNESCO. I wish to pay tribute to UNESCO's essential role in the protection of heritage and the promotion of cultural diversity as an instrument of peace and the moral conscience of humankind to remind us all that culture links people to their history and their regions. Thanks to UNESCO, States have committed themselves by adopting texts useful for the preservation of our common heritage. UNESCO's global mandate is more relevant than ever in a world where its fundamental values are often in jeopardy.

I also welcome the work of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL, which play a key role in preventing trafficking in cultural property by promoting judicial cooperation and raising awareness among States on issues that are still often misunderstood. I would also like to commend the presence this morning in the Security Council of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and of the Director-General of UNESCO, as well as to thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for his briefing.

I would also like to thank the British presidency, without whose efforts the joint invitation of France and Italy would never have seen the light of day. Allow me to express once again France's solidarity with our British friends who were attacked in the very birthplace of democracy, which is their Parliament.

The protection of heritage is a matter of civilization and an ethical issue that unites us all by way of our diverse affiliations. However, it is also a security issue, because illicit trafficking in looted cultural property during conflicts finances terrorist networks and is a factor in the development of armed conflicts themselves. Armed groups, in particular terrorist organizations, are strengthened by revenue derived from trafficking in cultural heritage. Stolen cultural objects in a country where war is waging then serve to perpetuate and intensify said conflict. Even after conflict, when peace is restored, heritage continues to play a major role in restoring peace as a symbol of resilience and unity for peoples whose blood has been shed. For all of the reasons I mentioned, the international community must take steps to act. This is a human imperative, a just cause and a key component of peace.

At this groundbreaking meeting this morning, the international community is taking action by way of the Security Council, which, for the first time, has adopted a comprehensive resolution devoted exclusively to the protection of at-risk heritage in armed conflict. This organ, whose responsibility is to ensure the maintenance of peace and security, is now fully equipped to deal with this particular issue through the text submitted by France and Italy. Of course, this issue has featured in other resolutions adopted by the Council in the past, but those provisions were limited and focused on specific areas, especially in the context of the fight against terrorism. For example, resolution 1267 (1999) calls for respect for Afghanistan's cultural and historical heritage, while resolution 2199 (2015)

condemns the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria — especially by Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front — and urges Member States to take appropriate measures to prevent the trafficking of cultural property from Iraq and Syria.

The urgency of the issue has led the Council today to underscore the importance of those resolutions and to become more broadly seized of the issue. In that regard, the Council can count on the contribution of the 43 States that met in December 2016 at the Abu Dhabi International Conference on Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage, organized by France and the United Arab Emirates, which I would like to commend for its decisive commitment. In their outcome document, those countries called on the Security Council to support the achievement of two main goals identified by the conference, namely, establishing an international fund for the protection of at-risk cultural heritage and creating a network of safe-havens.

Today's unanimous resolution is both comprehensive and balanced. It reflects the international community's full determination at the highest level. I am proud to have presented it along with my Italian colleague.

The resolution addresses the issue of at-risk heritage in situations of armed conflict by for the first time dealing with all the threats — destruction, theft and trafficking — without geographical limitation and regardless of whether or not those acts are carried out by listed terrorist groups or other armed groups. It explicitly links the financing of terrorist groups with trafficking in cultural property and strengthens the operational tools put in place to deal with this issue in previous Security Council resolutions. It also better encapsulates the link between terrorist groups and organized crime. It makes mention of the main outcomes of the Abu Dhabi Conference with regard to international law. And it strengthens cooperation among the relevant agencies and bodies dealing with this issue, without duplicating or replacing their work, while also encouraging States to cooperate further and to take operational and substantive measures. Finally, it calls on the Member States to ratify the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its Protocols, as France has done, having just joined the United Kingdom as the first permanent member of the Security Council to ratify the 1999 Second Protocol. As part of this mobilization effort and, above all, its cooperation on this issue, France intends to continue to play its full part, in particular by providing $30 million for the fund announced at the Abu Dhabi Conference, which already has more than $75 million in its coffers.

To believe that the modern era can be based on forgetting the past is a dangerous path to take. This new age can come about only by building on the shoulders of the giants who preceded us. Today we need to preserve the integrity of the "great book" of humanity, as referred to by Victor Hugo in *Notre-Dame de Paris*. He talked about heritage as the "great book of humanity, the key expression of what it means to be human". Of course, heritage is a living organism, one transformed through the ages. But the passage of time will determine what must endure in history, not the destructive passions of men.

This resolution calls us collectively to wisdom and to respect the passage of time, of history. Working for the cause of peace means preventing the destruction of cultural heritage in a murderous attempt to rewrite history. And it means preventing the heritage of peoples from being hijacked to finance violence and crime against their own history. That is the meaning of the historic resolution that we just adopted this morning.

Mr. Amendola (Italy): Our generation faces unprecedented attacks against and destruction of cultural heritage by terrorist groups in situations of armed conflict. This is not only an attack against the past, but also against our collective future. It affects people's identity and hampers post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding. It undermines values such as tolerance, respect and inclusivity. It deprives minority groups of their roots. It fuels conflicts.

The destruction of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and in situations of armed conflict can amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity. Together with the unprecedented scale of organized looting and illicit trafficking in cultural objects, such acts provide a source of income for terrorist groups, support their recruitment efforts and strengthen their operational capability to organize and carry out attacks.

For those reasons, and for the sake of our history, the protection of cultural heritage is a long-standing pillar of Italian foreign policy, and Italy is at the forefront of international efforts to safeguard and protect cultural heritage — including thanks to the specialized Carabinieri unit. We are also a staunch supporter of UNESCO and the outstanding commitments of Director-General Bukova. We promoted the adoption

of a resolution on culture in conflict areas and support the implementation of the "Unite4Heritage" Campaign, including through our national Task Force, as we just heard from General Parrulli.

As the current Chair of the Group of Seven (G-7), at the end of March we will host the first-ever meeting of G-7 Ministers of Culture. As partners of the global coalition against Da'esh, we co-Chair, along with the United States and Saudi Arabia, the counter-Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant finance group, whose work includes promoting the swift implementation of resolution 2199 (2015) to prevent terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria from benefiting from trading in oil, antiquities and hostages. We also chair its subgroup on illegal trafficking in cultural property. Among the major bilateral projects in which we are engaged, allow me to mention our successful cooperation with the Government of Iraq on safeguarding its immense cultural patrimony.

As a Security Council candidate, we made cultural heritage an overarching theme. Together with Jordan, UNESCO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL, we organized a series of seminars aimed at raising awareness and considering improved responses. As a Security Council member, we are convinced that this organ should pay more attention to the protection of cultural heritage, in the belief that the Council and the international community can, and should, unite around this issue.

For those reasons, and thanks to Ms. Azoulay, France and Italy promoted this briefing and proposed a Security Council resolution specifically dedicated to the issue. I thank all the members of the Security Council for the constructive engagement that led to the adoption of the historic resolution 2347 (2017), as well as to the United Kingdom presidency for scheduling the meeting in its programme of work. I also wish to acknowledge all the Member States that co-sponsored the text.

The destruction of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and organized criminal networks is a reality, and this resolution addresses it with clear language and concrete operational measures. But this issue has a broader relevance in the maintenance of international peace and security, one that goes beyond attacks by terrorist groups. Today the Council is sending a clear sign of commitment and an important response to the destruction of cultural patrimony during crises and conflict. The resolution is a balanced instrument that addresses both preventive initiatives and measures devoted to countering illegal excavation and the looting of, and trafficking in, cultural heritage at the domestic and international levels.

States are encouraged to adopt appropriate measures, in line with their national systems and with international frameworks and standards. Harmonized legislation and coordinated operational solutions are indispensable to provide an effective response. The Security Council is committing itself and the dedicated United Nations bodies to assist Member States and to strengthen all forms of cooperation. We are confident that this effort will contribute to preventing and countering actions that destroy and damage cultural heritage and that provide important financial support to criminal and terrorist groups.

Integrating the cultural dimension into the prevention and settlement of conflicts is not only a moral obligation, it is also a political and security imperative. Raising awareness and mobilizing international efforts are necessary, but not sufficient. Bringing to justice perpetrators of crimes against cultural heritage is also crucial, including to prevent future attacks, as highlighted by the historic judgment of the International Criminal Court last September in the case of *The Prosecutor v. Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi* relating to the destruction of cultural heritage in Timbuktu.

All over the world the cultural heritage passed down from previous centuries represents a message of tolerance, cultural understanding, religious harmony and respect. Totalitarian elements want to destroy the remarkable historical patrimony of our humanity. With this historic resolution we reaffirm the basic values of our civilizations.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia thanks the briefers for their statements, above all Mr. Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. In particular, I would like to single out not just the statement, but also the leadership shown by Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO. I also thank Mr. Yuri Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Brigadier General Fabrizio Parrulli, Commander of the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, for their briefings.

Bolivia also welcomes the initiative presented today by the delegations of Italy and France. Resolution 2347 (2017), adopted today, is a call to the international community and to the various United Nations agencies to effectively protect cultural artefacts and heritage in places where there is armed conflict, especially where terrorist groups are operating, who not just seek to undermine the rights of millions of people but are also trying to obliterate the shared culturalheritage of humankind to finance their vile acts.

We categorically condemn the looting, trafficking, smuggling and the like of cultural property carried out by non-State actors and terrorist groups, particularly Da'esh and Al-Qaida, to the detriment of sovereign nations and peoples. We urge the international community to collaborate closely and make all necessary efforts to prevent acts of that nature. We also emphatically condemn the destruction of historic sites and assets as a strategy for denying the cultural and historic roots of nations and peoples through terror and intimidation. We once again reject all terrorist acts as unjustifiable crimes, regardless of motivation, place, time or perpetrators. We reaffirm the need for all States to combat that phenomenon by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law.

We also believe it is essential to keep in mind that one of the reasons we are facing the smuggling, trafficking, looting and destruction of valuable historic cultural property today, not only in the Middle East but also in other parts of the world is due, in part, to the destruction of State infrastructure and inadequate security forces or authorities to prevent the commission of such acts. It is important, in our view, to identify the causes of that phenomenon, which has been occurring primarily in the Middle East. We would probably not be gathered here to tackle this difficult matter had it not been for the interventionist policies and invasions of recent years that led to the emergence and rise of terrorist groups that the international community is now facing.

We note that the Council has already expressed its concern over resolution 2347 (2017), adopted today, noting that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and other individuals, groups, businesses and entities associated with Al-Qaida, are generating income by participating directly or indirectly in the looting and smuggling of cultural property from archaeological sites, museums, libraries, archives and other locations in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic — which is being used to finance their recruitment and to bolster their operational capability to plan and carry out terrorist attacks.

The adoption of measures to combat that phenomenon notwithstanding, the general lack of effective control mechanisms in the international community has allowed ISIS and Al-Qaida to continue financing their murky operations via the looting, smuggling and sale of cultural property. That generated vast economic benefits, without which terrorist groups would not have been able to finance their criminal activities. The reduction or evasion of controls through tax havens, used by organized crime to legitimize its finances, only serves to undermine our efforts. We must rigorously investigate whether those terrorist groups have access to or are actually utilizing tax havens for those ends.

We wish to stress that the enforcement of today's resolution should focus on restoring historic sites and cultural property to the state they were in before the conflicts. It should also seek to neutralize explosive ordnances and demine those areas, as in the case of Palmyra, Syria.

We also note that General Assembly resolution 69/196 strongly urges Member States to apply international guidelines on crime prevention and criminal justice responses to the trafficking of cultural property and related crimes. In that connection, we call on all Member States to strengthen international cooperation and adopt joint measures to recover trafficked, looted, stolen or smuggled cultural property and, critically, to ensure its restoration and return to its place of origin.

While every case is different, many of the museums that now exhibit historic cultural property from other countries in their galleries, were also acquired through invasion, looting and other illegal means. Consequently, we are calling for enhanced policies for the restoration and return of that property, in a way that is consistent with instruments that have been approved by the United Nations.

Finally, we wish to express the special and specific importance of protecting cultural property in areas under foreign occupation, and stress UNESCO's key role in that crucial matter.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank the presidency of the United Kingdom for highlighting the importance of protecting cultural heritage as an imperative for humankind. We also convey our appreciation to the co-facilitators, France and Italy, for their efforts on resolution 2347 (2017), just adopted, which we were pleased to co-sponsor. We also welcome the briefings of Under-Secretary-General Feltman, UNESCO Director-General Bokova, Mr. Fedotov and General Parrulli.

We are witnessing the greatest threat to cultural heritage since the Second World War. Today, more than 55 cultural heritage sites are in danger of destruction in armed conflicts — 21 of them located in the Middle East and Northern Africa, in particular Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Libya and Syria. That unprecedented scale of attack constitutes cultural cleansing. Kazakhstan, as a member of the World Heritage Committee, welcomes the international community's efforts and initiatives to protect those sites. We co-sponsored the decision of the 199th session of UNESCO Executive Board, adopted last April, on UNESCO's role in safeguarding and preserving Palmyra and other Syria World Heritage sites.

My delegation would like to make the following recommendation on the matter. We call on Member States and other stakeholders to fully implement the recommendations of global forums, inter alia, the Donors Conference on Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage, held this week in Paris; the International Cultural Conference [COULD NOT FIND], held in Milan in mid-2015; the 4th International Cultural Forum, held in Saint Petersburg in December 2015.

Join the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas, spearheaded by France and the United Arab Emirates. Ratify and implement the relevant international treaties, conventions and other instruments, in addition to Security Council and UNESCO resolutions in that area. Provide trainings to prevent the illicit trafficking of cultural property. Support UNESCO's Heritage Emergency Fund and Unite4Heritage global campaign. Strengthen UNESCO's Global Coalition for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, as the Director-General's agenda for action on the matter and for the promotion of cultural pluralism. Introduce strict measures to prevent the legal removal of cultural heritage from archaeological sites being stolen from museums, trafficked and sold to private collections by terrorist groups. Such plunder has become a lucrative source of terrorist financing, replacing the diminishing income from oil resources. Ensure greater vigilance of all sources of financing, including money laundering and diverse markets, such as auction houses and the Internet — through which Da'esh runs nearly $100 million annually.

Utilize the INTERPOL database of stolen works of art and establish special police units for that purpose. The resolution of stolen cultural property is mandated under international law, so enhancing the effectiveness of procedures in domestic courts is critical. All should work closely with INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization, UNESCO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime — which should suggest key actions to ensure the protection of cultural heritage.

Finally, Kazakhstan is committed to the protection of cultural heritage as a fundamental tool of preventive diplomacy to support the development of peaceful societies, strengthen sustainable development and suppress terrorist financing.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine): We are most grateful to the delegations of France and Italy for raising the subject of protection of cultural heritage in armed conflicts. Events of recent history pushed that issue into the spotlight of the international community. We fully share the main idea of resolution 2347 (2017), adopted today — to prevent the destruction, trafficking, looting and smuggling of cultural property during armed conflicts.

How many of the Seven Wonders of the World is it possible to see preserved today? Some of them were lost to natural disasters, and others vanished because of human behaviour. The importance of the issue that we are discussing today was very succinctly articulated by François Bugnion, a renowned expert on international humanitarian law from the International Committee of the Red Cross. He said:

> "Close your eyes and imagine Paris without Notre Dame [...] Giza without the pyramids [...] Peking without the Forbidden City, New York without the Statue of Liberty, Moscow without Red Square and Saint Basil's Cathedral".

The international community has a special responsibility to safeguard objects of cultural heritage that represent our nations' identities and have long become an integral part of humankind's history.

During the time of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Emer de Vattel, the principle of making the distinction

between military and civilian property, as well as that of respecting sites and places of worship and cultural significance, became one of the foundational elements of customary international humanitarian law. Since then, the international community has developed a wide framework of rules and procedures to protect cultural property from harm. The core elements of the respective regime are the Second Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and the Additional Protocols of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions of 1949. However, cultural property continues to be the object of destruction, looting and trafficking. In the aftermath of recent conflicts in Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa, the numerous barbaric acts committed against our very civilization still loom fresh in our mind.

Regrettably, the topic of today's discussion is also relevant to the situation in my own country as parts of its cultural heritage are being destroyed, looted, illicitly excavated and subsequently trafficked out of Ukraine — including, in particular, to the Russian Federation — all of which has resulted from the attempted annexation of Crimea and Russia's military intervention in Donbas.

Yet States are not the only perpetrators of crimes related to cultural property. There is a growing trend of such offences being committed by non-State actors, including criminal and armed and terrorist groups. Striking examples of the deliberate and systematic destruction of our common heritage by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida, the Taliban and their affiliates have been witnessed by the entire international community. As a result of such cultural genocide, future generations are robbed of the opportunity to admire the beauty of, inter alia, the temples in Palmyra and the sculptures in Al-Raqqa in Syria; the ancient cities of Nimrud and Hatra, as well as the renowned historic mosques and libraries of Mosul in Iraq; the Sufi shrines outside of Tripoli in Libya; the unique architecture of Timbuktu in Mali; and the statues of the Buddha carved into the Bamiyan cliffs in Afghanistan.

In targeting cultural heritage, terrorists not only draw attention to their activities and intimidate Governments, as well as the public. They also attempt to rewrite history and erase entire chapters from the collective memory of people. Moreover, they actively traffick in cultural property that is illicitly excavated or looted to fund their atrocities. As confirmed by numerous reports of the Secretary-General, UNESCO and other relevant United Nations agencies, it has become a widespread practice, thereby improving the ability of those groups to continue to commit terrorist acts. It is high time to take decisive actions to break that vicious cycle. That is why resolution 2347 (2017) is so important.

We commend the activities of UNESCO as a key player in the area of the protection and recovery of cultural heritage worldwide. Ukraine fully supports the Unite for Heritage campaign, as well as the draft action plan on the implementation Strategy for Reinforcing UNESC's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict. We thank Director-General Bokova for her personal commitment and dedication.

We hope that today's resolution will reinforce bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation in support of the respective efforts of UNESCO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and other relevant international entities to protect cultural property, which constitutes our common treasure.

We would like to point out several important elements of resolution 2347 (2017), the first of which concerns the primary responsibility of States to protect their cultural property. Failure to achieve that goal is the result not of a lack of existing international instruments, but rather of States' will to abide by their commitments and obligations.

Secondly, there is the initiative to establish in-country safe zones for the preservation of moveable cultural property threatened by conflicts.

Thirdly, establishing inventories of cultural property and other items of historical, cultural and religious importance that have been illegally transferred from areas of armed conflict, notably from territories under foreign occupation, would be particularly useful for ensuring their future safe return to their countries of origin.

Fourthly, there is the matter of bringing to justice the perpetrators of crimes related to cultural property. In that regard, we welcome the respective efforts of all national and international jurisdictions and call for close cooperation between law enforcement and customs agencies in investigations, prosecutions, seizures and confiscations, as well as the return, restitution or

repatriation of trafficked cultural property. We commend in particular the recent decision of the International Criminal Court that, for the first time, convicted a war criminal for intentionally directing attacks against religious buildings and historic monuments.

Last but not least, the proposed report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2347 (2017) should provide us with an opportunity to comprehensively examine the problem and assess its gravity and scale based on information provided by Member States to develop concrete recommendations and durable solutions.

We are ready to contribute to that process.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I thank the United Kingdom presidency for putting this item on the agenda and the briefers for their contributions here and the work that they do in their respective organizations with regard to this very important issue.

The destruction, looting and trafficking of cultural heritage not only inflict damage on the places and the peoples in the affected areas, but also untold damage is wrought on the understanding of our common history and shared humanity. The end result is that the knowledge, beauty and diversity of our world are all diminished for everyone. The destruction of the ancient city of Palmyra, the mausoleums and manuscripts of Timbuktu and the mosques of Mosul, among others, are wanton and needless acts of vandalism. Such iconoclasm has been seen before in all parts of the globe, yet the most recent wave is all the more cynical as it is often a front for the looting of artefacts for sale on the black market and for garnering publicity for those carrying out those barbarous actions.

Our primary concern, of course, in situations of conflict must be the protection of the life and dignity of civilians whose lives are destroyed because of war and instability. We must also look towards the post-conflict phase and how to rebuild peaceful societies based on trust and mutual understanding. In that regard, the destruction and disappearance of culture heritage can have profound and unanticipated consequences by obliterating unique historical and cultural values essential to providing us with an understanding of our past, present and future. The fact that armed groups and, in particular, terrorist groups in ongoing conflicts finance their activity through the illegal trafficking of cultural property is of great concern. The sheer number of illicitly trafficked cultural objects confiscated in countries neighbouring ongoing conflicts in 2016 alone is a clear illustration of the extent of the problem.

The destruction, looting and trafficking of culture heritage in situations of armed conflict are not a new phenomenon. The protection of cultural property in armed conflict is firmly rooted in the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and customary international humanitarian law wherein under certain circumstances the intentional destruction of such cultural heritage may amount to war crimes. States therefore have a duty to investigate attacks against cultural property and bring perpetrators to justice. With that in mind, we welcome the recent judgment by the International Criminal Court in the Al Mahdi case. Moreover, UNESCO has agreed a range of conventions related to those issues, which together with the Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, provide important tools to address them. Our common measures against terrorism, including against the financing of terrorism through the illicit trade of cultural property, also play an important role.

Sweden is in the process of adhering to the Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and we encourage others to do the same. We also support the ongoing work of the Council of Europe in that area. We have taken a number of actions to implement resolution 2199 (2015), which condemns trade in cultural property from Syria and Iraq, such as setting up a national coordination function across relevant Government agencies. We have also reinforced national police capacity in the field of cultural heritage and launched a public awareness-raising campaign in line with UNESCO's global Unite for Heritage campaign.

We underline UNESCO's leading role in the protection of cultural heritage. We support the Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action in the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict, and we look forward to the action plan to implement it. UNESCO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, INTERPOL, the World Customs Organization and States, as well as various institutions and individuals, contribute in valuable ways to preventing the destruction of and illicit trade in cultural heritage. It is essential that their actions support and complement each other.

We therefore welcome the adoption of resolution 2347 (2017), introduced by France and Italy, which we were pleased to co-sponsor. The resolution is an important step forward in the fight against the destruction, looting and trafficking of cultural heritage in conflict situations. We further commend the initiative taken by France and the United Arab Emirates to create safe havens for cultural objects, and we are studying with close interest ways in which that and other initiatives may complement each other.

A holistic approach will bring new perspectives. Sweden looks forward to the report of the Secretary-General as we look into how the Security Council can continue to address that important issue. Our cultural heritage is integral to our shared humanity. Its destruction in any part of the world leaves us all poorer. We owe it to our future generations to do everything within our power to protect our common cultural heritage.

Mr. Rosselli (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): I too wish to thank Ms. Bokova, Mr. Feltman, Mr. Fedotov and Brigadier General Parrulli for their enlightening briefing this morning.

My delegation congratulates the French and Italian delegations for their initiative leading to the adoption of resolution 2347 (2017), which Uruguay co-sponsored. We consider it to be a useful tool in the maintenance of international peace and security.

On previous occasions, Uruguay has expressed its principled position rejecting all forms of terrorism and armed conflict and supporting any initiative aimed first and foremost at protecting people, as well as those goods that form part of a nation's heritage and cultural tapestry. International cooperation is crucial to preventing the traffic in cultural works or objects and the use of such criminal activity to finance terrorism.

Uruguay deplores the destruction of cultural heritage, particularly involving religious sites and the pillaging and smuggling of goods out of archeological sites, carried out in situations of armed conflict by terrorist groups. We acknowledge that UNESCO should play a leading role in the protection of cultural heritage and draw attention to the Unite for Heritage initiative, which seeks to create a world movement of young people raising their voices to safeguard threatened cultural heritage, which should be preserved as a common goods. We would also point to the key role played by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL in the prevention of all trafficking in cultural goods.

The establishment of a network of safe havens, as referred to in resolution 2347 (2017), should meet the needs and requirements of the affected countries, in accordance with domestic legislation and applicable international conventions. Priority must be accorded to preserving cultural goods in the event of conflict in the territory of the affected country, only when the option of foreign safe havens is not available.

In such cases, UNESCO could provide coordination assistance between the affected State and the safe haven. Such coordination could include establishing agreements on modalities for the restitution of cultural works and heritage and, upon request, technical support and cooperation in transferring and preserving such goods. The second preambular paragraph of the UNESCO constitution establishes that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".

Cultural heritage is one of the ways in which we can truly forge peace among nations. In the light of the new threats to States, including terrorism, we must continue to harmonize joint efforts to protect our cultural heritage, which is the symbol of the collective human identity and links us to our history. It is our duty to pass it on to succeeding generations.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the United Kingdom presidency of the Council for having convened this morning's important meeting. Similar thanks go to France and to Italy for having raised this very important subject at the level of the Security Council. We also wish to thank all of our briefers this morning for their interventions. In particular, we deeply thank Ms. Bokova for all that she has done and her ongoing efforts in her role as Director-General of UNESCO. UNESCO is the world's conscience, particularly regarding the preservation of the cultural heritage of all States.

The safeguarding and protection of cultural heritage from all destructive acts, including trafficking and exploitation for terrorist purposes, is an extremely sensitive subject, because it involves sites, monuments, museums and other tangible goods that are directly linked to the history and very identity of peoples and nations. Cultural heritage is therefore no less important in terms of value than land or even honour — as an

intangible concept — for the peoples and States that own such heritage, or other custodians thereof.

Egypt enjoys a precious and rich cultural heritage that is appreciated, known and respected by all. We are therefore highly familiar with the importance and sensitivity of the issue. We need to safeguard our cultural heritage from destruction and trafficking, whether on the part of terrorist groups or in circumstances of armed conflict. As I have said, our cultural heritage is precious, respected, known and appreciated by all, and we are particularly sensitive to the importance of this issue, given our geographical positon on a continent and in a region where the majority of global and cultural heritage is to be found.

Against that backdrop and in the light of the importance and sensitivity of the issue of protecting cultural heritage, the Egyptian delegation reiterated in the negotiations of resolution 2347 (2017), which was adopted today, the importance of including in the resolution a number of principles and restrictions, without which our delegation would not have been able to vote in its favour. I would like to draw attention to the key principles and restrictions to which I have just referred.

First, we reaffirm that the key role is to be played by each individual State in the protection of its own cultural heritage. Efforts to protect cultural heritage during armed conflict must respect the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and be pursued strictly in line with international law. The importance of respecting a State's sovereignty is also key, as is respect for the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We also reiterate that the protection of cultural heritage, including through the establishment of a network of safe havens, can be undertaken only with the support of the State custodian of that cultural heritage. Safe havens should be established only on its territory. Egypt rejects any interference, present or future, in the internal affairs of a State on the pretext of protecting cultural heritage. We reject the transfer of a State's cultural heritage out of its territory under the pretext of conserving it in safe havens. We have only to look at our own cultural heritage and that of other countries. That heritage is exhibited in the museums of third countries, which had seized that heritage and refuse to date to restore them to their States.

Secondly, it is crucial that UNESCO, as an agency that specializes in the topic of cultural heritage, continue to provide assistance to countries, at their request, so that they may be in a position to protect their cultural heritage. Furthermore, it is essential that the Security Council only deal with cultural heritage in situations where there is a threat to international peace and security, international counter-terrorism activities or an international conflict that figures on the agenda of the Council.

Thirdly, it is important States take the necessary measures to forestall and prevent illicit trafficking in cultural goods, particularly in areas of conflict, and specifically that committed by terrorist groups.

Fourthly, it is essential that States draft lists of cultural goods that have been transferred illegally during armed conflict and that, in that regard, they coordinate with United Nations bodies and relevant international entities in order to ensure the safe restitution of those goods.

Fifthly, we must affirm the possibility of including among the tasks of peacekeeping organizations the provision of support to concerned States, at their request, for the protection of their cultural heritage from destruction, looting or other similar crimes.

Moreover, the Egyptian delegation worked for the inclusion in the resolution a reference to the need to protect cultural goods and heritage in areas under foreign occupation. Unfortunately, objections of a political nature to our proposal meant that we were unable to include that key idea in the resolution.

Lastly, Egypt welcomes the adoption today of resolution 2347 (2017), in particular because the protection of cultural heritage is a noble objective. However, we wish to underscore, as we have done in past meetings, that it remains crucial for States to implement Security Council resolutions, including that just adopted. As such, we expect States to implement their commitments, in compliance with that resolution, and particularly in compliance with the principles and restrictions contained therein. We will not allow such provisions to be flouted.

Mr. Zagaynov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I thank all the briefers for their participation in this meeting and for their valuable contributions to today's discussion.

Our delegation fully shares concerns over the unprecedented damage done to cultural heritage by supporters of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), Jabhat Al-Nusra and other terrorist groups operating in Iraq, Syria, Libya and other conflict zones. We believe that stamping out barbaric terrorism should be the specific goal of the international community in this sphere. Proceeds from the trade in cultural heritage remain one of the main sources of ISIS financing.

Over the past two years, the Council has made significant progress in developing instruments to combat the financing of terrorism. Resolutions 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015), prepared with the very active participation of our own delegation, touched on the issue of cultural heritage. At Russia's request, changes were made to the universal Financial Action Task Force standards on combating financing of terrorism, in line with those Security Council resolutions, which is welcomed in resolution 2347 (2017), adopted today.

However, the international community has not yet been able to fully cut off ISIS financing. In those circumstances, further work is needed to create a system that fully rules out any kind of economic cooperation with terrorists and establishes a comprehensive embargo on trade with ISIS. In the resolution just adopted, provisions are included, inter alia, on sanctions against persons and entities that aid and abet the trade in cultural heritage. We again call on all States to immediately submit to the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities, any information that they have on sources of funding for terrorists, including evidence of acquisition of artefacts from territory under the control of ISIS and Jabhat Al-Nusra.

Urgent measures are needed to maintain for future generations the priceless treasure of culture in areas where terrorists and radicals are active. This issue is perhaps most pressing in Syria. The symbol of the trials and tribulations of the long-suffering people of that country was the ancient city of Palmyra, a jewel of human civilization. That city, which was seized and destroyed by terrorists, has now been liberated. It is our duty to help restore and give that monument back to the Syrians and the entire world.

The first step in that regard must be erasing the footprints of those who turned Palmyra into an arena for the demonstration of their inhumane, futile ideology, and a place of torture and crime. Palmyra is literally sown with mines and unexploded ordinance, preventing a genuine assessment of the destruction and attempts at restoration. Russia is already working to address this task, and those efforts would be helped by the creation of an international coalition on the demining of Syrian territory. We urge all partners involved in maintaining historical heritage to set aside their well-known differences and to do their part in a common undertaking, which will require, inter alia, significant financial investment. It is vitally important that today the Council has called on Member States, United Nations specialized agencies and other international structures to provide assistance in demining places of cultural heritage. We expect to see the active involvement of the United Nations Secretariat, UNESCO and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in such efforts in Palmyra.

A leading role in the preservation og cultural heritage is played by UNESCO. We support the Strategy for Reinforcing UNESCO's Action for the Protection of Culture and the Promotion of Cultural Pluralism in the Event of Armed Conflict. In developing this document at the fourth Saint Petersburg Cultural Forum, we adopted a declaration on the protection of culture in armed conflict zones. It is necessary to pull together and forge coordination among the various international initiatives on protecting cultural heritage, thereby ensuring full effectiveness, including through a proper division of labour. For example, we need to avoid a situation whereby the international fund to safeguard endangered cultural heritage in areas of armed conflict, as announced in Abu Dhabi, would duplicate or even compete with the work of the UNESCO World Heritage Fund.

Once again, the scale of illegal trade in cultural heritage is testament to the links between terrorists and organized crime groups. The resolution just adopted again addresses this problem by building on the relevant provisions of resolutions 1373 (2001) and 2195 (2014). It also reflects important elements from General Assembly resolution 69/281 with regard to preventing illegal trade in cultural heritage. We support the strengthening and active use of the scientific analytical capacities of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in this sphere, including the provision of specialized technical assistance to States. We note

the contribution of UNODC in combating crimes against cultural heritage.

Once again, we wish to reiterate Russia's commitment to combating international terrorism and our willingness to develop specialized cooperation with all interested parties in combating the destruction of and illegal trade in cultural heritage.

In accordance with tradition, I must say a few words following the statement delivered by the Ukranian delegation. It showed that Ukraine used this discussion in the Council of a noble task — the protection of cultural heritage — just as it has always used discussions on any topic in a multilateral setting to continue its information propaganda war against Russia. This is a source of grave concern and we shall not respond to the inappropriate remarks they made.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the convening by the United Kingdom of this meeting on the protection against the destruction and trafficking of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and in situations of armed conflict.

I thank Under-Secretary-General Feltman, Director-General Bokova, Executive Director Fedotov and Brigadier General Parrulli for their briefings.

As we speak, in some parts of the world, ongoing armed conflicts and rampant terrorist activities not only seriously jeopardize the lives and properties in affected countries, but also add invaluable cultural heritage as a target of attacks and as a source of terrorist financing through smuggling and trafficking, thereby causing heavy losses to human civilization. The international community needs to scale up its support for countries in conflict areas and cut off the channels for terrorist groups smuggling and trafficking in cultural heritage in a joint effort to protect cultural heritage against harm caused by conflict.

First, efforts need to be scaled up to support States in situations of conflict in building up their national capacity for protection. Countries in conflict areas need to focus more attention on the protection of their cultural heritage, formulate relevant protection policies, establish early warning mechanisms, join relevant international cooperation frameworks and continuously enhance capacity-building for the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict. The international community, while respecting the sovereignty of the countries in conflict areas, needs to provide constructive support and fully respect the national ownership of all cultural heritage.

Secondly, efforts to combat terrorism need to be intensified. Terrorism has become the main threat to cultural heritage in conflict areas. Resolution 2347 (2017), which was just adopted by the Council, provides a framework for cooperation in preventing terrorist groups from destroying cultural heritage and smuggling or trafficking in cultural heritage for terrorist financing. All countries should effectively implement the resolution and maximize the role of the relevant Council mechanisms and build an information network against the destruction and smuggling of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and resolutely crack down on terrorist activities to destroy, smuggle and traffic cultural heritage.

Thirdly, international cooperation should be further strengthened. All countries should strengthen cooperation in the field of cultural heritage protection and cooperate in information-sharing and law enforcement cooperation in the fight against the destruction and trafficking of cultural heritage by terrorist groups and in situations of armed conflict. The United Nations, the Security Council and the other specialized agencies, such as UNESCO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, should leverage their respective professional advantage and strengthen their coordination in accordance with the division of labour to form an international synergy for the protection of cultural heritage in conflict areas.

China has been actively supporting and participating in international cooperation on endangered cultural heritage and will continue to work with the international community to make a positive contribution to the prevention of the destruction and trafficking in cultural heritage by terrorist groups and in situations of armed conflict.

Ms. Sison (United States of America): The United States thanks the Governments of France and Italy for taking the initiative to rally the international community to protect our world's common heritage from being used to further armed conflicts.

Over the past two decades, we have seen damage to and destruction of our shared cultural heritage on an unprecedented scale. Those engaged in conflict and terror deliberately destroy cultural property to create fear, undermine Governments and cause animosity among different groups within a society. The wanton

devastation by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), Al-Qaida and others in Iraq and Syria, by the Taliban in Afghanistan, and by other groups elsewhere has taken a devastating toll not only on human lives, but also on our common cultural heritage. This destruction tears at the very fabric of our societies.

The policy of the United States Government is clear. The unlawful destruction or trafficking of cultural heritage is deplorable. We unequivocally oppose it and we will take all feasible steps to halt, limit and discourage it. The United States seeks to hold accountable those who engage in the illegal trade of cultural property and the perpetrators of deliberate cultural heritage destruction.

Enhanced international law enforcement cooperation to counter these destructive and destabilizing activities is already showing results. For example, the United States shared information with our international partners about the activities of the deceased Abu Sayyaf, a former high-ranking ISIS official who was responsible for financing the group's terrorist activities, including through the illicit sale of antiquities. Growing international coordination and cooperation among law enforcement and other agencies enabled the United States to take direct action in order to seek the recovery of these items.

We believe that there are no one-size-fits-all strategies for cultural heritage preservation in armed conflict. Complex situations around the world warrant a variety of responses. Many States have demonstrated the ability to safeguard their cultural treasures in conflict zones during times of crisis. It is a long-standing United States policy to preserve cultural heritage in situ whenever possible, thereby avoiding the need to remove cultural property from its country of origin.

The United States looks forward to strengthened international cooperation and to finding new channels of cooperation for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage in armed conflicts in order to preserve this priceless inheritance for future generations.

Mr. Alemu (Ethiopia): We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2347 (2017) on the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflicts and we appreciate the efforts of France and Italy in facilitating the negotiations on the resolution as co-pen holders. I also wish to thank the presidency for making all this possible.

In light of the increasing intentional attacks on cultural heritage by armed groups and terrorists, the adoption of this resolution represents a very important step in addressing a problem, which calls for a far more strengthened international cooperation. The resolution indeed has clear added value for it complements existing international legal instruments in the protection of cultural heritage.

We express appreciation to all the briefers: Under-Secretary-General Feltman, Director-General Bokova, Executive Director Fedotov and Brigadier General Parrulli for sharing their perspectives on the topic of our discussion. I want in particular to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Director-General Bokova for the major and critical contribution she has been making to ensure that UNESCO succeeds in carrying out its mandate. We are indeed grateful for this is a historical period when so much is going on to undermine our common humankind.

UNESCO is the custodian of that shared heritage. We have all witnessed in recent years armed groups and terrorists actively engaging in the looting, theft, pillage and destruction of cultural heritage as a war tactic and means of terrorizing the civilian population. They have also been involved in the illicit trade of cultural property to finance and support their activities and fuel conflict. International law makes it an obligation to safeguard and respect cultural heritage in the context of armed conflict. That includes taking all necessary preventive measures to protect cultural heritage in peacetime, refraining from attacking it and prohibiting any form of its pillage or destruction. It is in that context that the role of the Security Council could be both important and relevant. The primary responsibility of the Security Council in ensuring international peace and security demands that it not remain indifferent when armed groups and terrorists target the collective heritage of humankind that is symbolic of our common humanity.

International law provides special protection for cultural heritage, as well as civilian property. As such, States are required to take all the necessary measures within the framework of their criminal legislation to prosecute and criminalize individuals, groups or entities responsible for such crimes. Special care must be taken in military operations, including by United Nations peacekeeping missions, to avoid damaging cultural heritage. The Security Council should further strengthen its work to ensure compliance with the obligation on the part of States to prohibit, prevent and

stop to any form of theft, pillage or misappropriation of cultural property in the context of armed conflict by armed groups and terrorists. In that regard, the role of Security Council Committees on counter-terrorism will be critical. Though they are narrow in scope compared to the resolution that we have adopted today, ensuring the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly 2199 (2015), 2253 (2015) and 2322 (2016), will also be significant.

Such efforts could be complemented by initiatives and cooperation among Member States in various United Nations forums. For instance, Ethiopia, in collaboration with other countries, joined an initiative to bring the issue of cultural heritage to the attention of the Human Rights Council, which resulted in the adoption of the action-oriented resolution 33/20, which we will continue to follow closely. Such efforts could be further complemented by bilateral, regional and international cooperation among States, including in the context of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, UNESCO, INTERPOL and other relevant international and regional frameworks. The Council might also consider mandating United Nations peacekeeping missions so as to protect cultural heritage from being attacked by armed groups and terrorists, based on the experience gleaned from the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and where such mandates are deemed necessary and feasible.

Finally, as home to eight cultural World Heritage Sites, Ethiopia attaches great importance to the protection and preservation of cultural heritage. We have indeed been shocked and dismayed by the destruction of cultural heritage in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali and other parts of the world by armed groups and terrorists, which is an affront to all humankind. Our briefers have highlighted that last point in a very vivid and palpable manner. We therefore earnestly hope that the resolution that we have unanimously adopted today will contribute to safeguarding cultural heritage and countering the illicit trafficking of cultural property in the context of armed conflict.

It was a great opportunity for us to be able to co-sponsor resolution 2347 (2017).

Mr. Minami (Japan): At the outset, I would like to join others in thanking the briefers — Mr. Feltman, Ms. Bokova, Mr. Fedotov and Brigadier General Parrulli — for their insight on this important topic. I welcome the adoption of resolution 2347 (2017) and commend the leadership of Italy and France in that regard. The resolution is a significant step forward on this subject leading to concrete actions.

We are witnessing tragic instances in which cultural heritage is targeted to be deliberately destroyed, looted and smuggled by terrorist groups for the purpose of achieving or advancing their nefarious goals. Japan shares the widespread concern about the situation and strongly condemns those acts. The international community should promptly and collectively respond to that challenge, and I would like to state several insights that Japan emphasizes in that regard.

First, the universalization of the international frameworks to protect cultural heritage is crucial. Japan is a State party to the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention of 1954 for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 1970, and other related conventions. Under those legal frameworks, Japan introduced various domestic measures to prevent the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage. I would like to call on other States that are not yet party to those conventions to join us in our efforts.

Secondly, we should support the meaningful activities of UNESCO in the area. Accordingly, Japan established the Japanese Funds-in-trust for the Preservation of World Cultural Heritage, and we have thus far contributed $68 million to that fund. Through UNESCO, we have supported many projects in conflict areas, including Afghanistan, Cambodia and Iraq. Furthermore, I would like to underline the importance of the documentation and archiving of data related to cultural heritage. That would help minimize the potential damage by terrorist groups as well as facilitate criminal justice procedures.

Moreover, we should focus on capacity-building efforts. It is vital to foster human resources in targeted countries for the protection and restoration of cultural heritage. Training in such areas as theft prevention, early warning and the relocation of cultural heritage in armed conflict must be carried out for the sake of preparedness. Sharing best practices and lessons learned among intelligence organizations such as UNESCO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and

Crime and INTERPOL is particularly relevant in that respect. I am convinced that implementing such measures would contribute to preventing terrorist groups from achieving their goals.

Japan has been actively engaged in international cooperation since the early post-war period. The Japanese people understand how cultural heritage enriches our minds and lives through teaching us about our past. To steal or destroy cultural heritage is to steal or destroy our past and future. It is therefore clear that such actions seriously undermine international peace and stability.

Japan stands ready to continue working together with the other Member States and international organizations to preventing such atrocities.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The Conference on Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage, held in Abu Dhabi from 2 to 3 December 2016 on a joint initiative of France and the United Arab Emirates, has already allowed us to broaden the scope of our reflection on the crucial importance concerning the protection of cultural heritage in areas of conflict. It is a major challenge for which the international community — beginning with the Security Council — must quickly find a rapid and coordinated response. I would therefore like to enthusiastically commend France and Italy for their leadership with regard to that initiative, as well as you, Sir, for having organized this meeting allowing us to follow up.

I would also like to thank the following briefers for their respective quality briefings: Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs; Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO; Mr. Yury Fedotov, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and Brigadier General Fabrizio Parrulli, Commander of the Italian Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage.

I believe that, on a similar tack, this would be an appropriate juncture to pay tribute to the often anonymous but numerous and important actors who work tirelessly around the world for the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage of peoples. In that regard, I pay particular tribute to UNESCO.

Humankind has been scarred by the massive and brutal destruction perpetrated by terrorists in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq or Libya, as well as in Mali, where we have witnessed, powerless and alarmed, the destruction of tombs and precious manuscripts that are often hundreds of years old. I recall that Senegal actively contributed to the important Saint Petersburg Declaration of June 2012, condemning the destruction of the aforementioned tombs.

The spread of armed conflict throughout the world, exacerbated by the violent extremism advocated by terrorist groups, whose calling card is the destruction or looting and trafficking of cultural heritage, is an aggravating factor of the threat to world heritage. We must therefore take the physical and symbolic dimension into account in the international community's efforts to adopt new strategies to respond to the destructive and even nihilist fury of terrorist groups. We therefore think it important to begin to compile the most precise inventory possible of cultural goods and objects of architectural, historical, cultural and religious importance that have been illegally moved, removed or transferred from trafficked out of conflict zones. We must be able to trace such objects, in cooperation with the relevant international institutions, United Nations agencies and international stakeholders, such as museums and even private collectors, with a view to repatriating stolen goods.

Paragraph 4 of resolution 2347 (2017), just adopted, is key in its stipulation that

> "unlawful attacks against sites and buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, or historic monuments may constitute, under certain circumstances and pursuant to international law a war crime and that perpetrators of such attacks must be brought to justice".

The Senegalese delegation welcomes the recent decision of the International Criminal Court of 27 September 2016, which for the first time in the history of humankind identifies the destruction of a religious and cultural heritage site as a crime of war and condemns the perpetrators of such atrocious acts to an exemplary sentence of nine years. That sets an important international legal precedent.

The protection of cultural heritage is first and foremost the responsibility of the State custodian. The United Nations and other relevant bodies must provide requesting Governments with the support and assistance they need to establish national protection mechanisms. We also welcome the announcement made at the Abu Dhabi conference that a global fund would be set up to

protect endangered cultural heritage, complementary to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund. It is also essential for States to strengthen bilateral, subregional and regional cooperation through joint initiatives, particularly in the framework of relevant UNESCO programmes.

Those who have spoken before me have described as historic the strong and unanimous message that we have sent through the adoption of resolution 2347 (2017). The resolution strengthens and expands the scope of similar, existing international instruments, including resolution 2199 (2015), the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, and the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, not to mention the relevant provisions introduced by the Security Council into peackeeping mandates, such as those for operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Mali.

Resolution 2347 (2017) offers a good road map and calls for more proactive global mobilization and multiform and multistakeholder cooperation. For all of those reasons, the delegation of Senegal supproted the adoption of the resolution in co-sponsoring it and voting in its favour.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

Let me begin by thanking our briefers this morning, welcoming the unanimous adoption of resolution 2347 (2017) and paying tribute to France and to Italy for bringing this issue to the Council.

Today, all our briefers and all members of the Council have really brought home the sheer scale of the problem that we face. Whether in Timbuktu, Palmyra or Bamiyan, this is an issue that goes beyond statues, beyond artefacts and beyond museums. What we are witnessing is a systematic and corrosive assault on history, religion and the very fabric of identity. What we are witnessing is, in many cases, war crimes. This is not just wanton pillaging and vandalism; this is a matter of international peace and security. Stolen statues in Syrian and Iraq do not just line the pockets of opportunists and looters; they provide a source of revenue for Da'esh. And in the region, the destruction of religious and cultural sites is about more than just bricks and mortar. Sectarian division can be fuelled by pickaxes and sledgehammers, just as it can be by bullets and by guns.

So let us respond to this cultural destruction with the same intensity and the same unity of purpose as we do to any other threat to international peace and security. Though this resolution today, we have taken a step forward in doing so. The unanimous adoption of the resolution shows the strength of our resolve and of our condemnation of such actions. It shows our commitment and determination to act against perpetrators so that we can combat terrorism, prevent conflict and protect vulnerable communities.

But as with so many issues before the Council, implementation is now needed. The United Kingdom will do its utmost to do so. That is why we have established a $30-million cultural programme fund to support projects that help to foster, safeguard and promote cultural heritage in countries affected by conflict. These projects are helping complete the new museum in Basra, helping to protect heritage and traditional crafts skills in Kabul, and supporting advanced archaeological techniques and technology for achaeologists across the Middle East and North Africa. It is an effort furthered by the British Museum, which is training Iraqi heritage sector workers so that they have the skills needed to assess and record the condition of their heritage sites and carry out rescue archaeology, as required.

It is already bearing fruit. A participant in the training has been appointed by the Iraqi state board to lead the assessment of the site of Nimrud, recently released from Da'esh control, and another participant is looking forward to returning to Mosul Museum soon. But it is not enough to train civilians. It is often the brave men and women of the armed forces who are at the front line of the threat against cultural heritage. That is why the United Kingdom last year set up a cultural property protection unit so that respect for cultural property is further integrated into the training and operations of our armed forces. This includes respecting domestic and international law, as well as the obligations of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its protocols, which we will ratify shortly.

The action we take as a Council or as Member States will count for little unless we show that there are real consequences for those who carry out these acts. To truly rid the world of this scourge, we need to deter and

punish as well as prevent. Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi was the first person convicted by the International Criminal Court for attacking protected sites, but he cannot be the last. If we are to deter others from following his path, we need to see more convictions and more consequences. His story should serve as a warning to all those who choose to attack cultural heritage — a warning that the Council must ensure is heeded.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

The meeting rose at noon.